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LITERARY SOCIETIES

OF

CENTRE COLLEGE, KY.

JUNE 25, 1850.

BY EDWARD P. HUMPHREY.

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NOTE.—This Address, as now published, contains some passages which were omitted, for the sake of brevity, in the delivery. It is printed in compliance with the following request :

DANVILLE, June 26, 1850.

REV. E. P. HUMPHREY, Louisville :

SIR—We, the undersigned, joint committee for the Deinologian and Chamberlain Literary Societies of Centre College, in their behalf, tender to you their sincere thanks for your very beautiful and appropriate Address delivered before them, on last evening, and request a copy of the same for publication.

Respectfully yours,

JAS. M. WRIGHT,

M. S. FIELDS,

WM. M. FOX,

Deinologian Committee.

J. G. C. BERRYMAN,

E. M. GARNETT,

B. H. PALMER,

Chamberlain Committee.

A D D R E S S .

THE present year will close the first half of the nineteenth century. A survey of the progress of society, during this period, will not be inappropriate to the place and the occasion. The materials are ample for an imposing statement. The brief circuit of fifty years, now nearly completed, forms one of the most eventful epochs in the history of the world. The triumphs of christianity, brilliant discoveries in science, remarkable inventions, the fruits of an expanding commerce and colonization, the ruins of old dynasties and the foundations of new and powerful states, sturdy virtues and stupendous crimes, the tokens of national greatness and degeneracy, the signals of martial glory and disgrace, revolutions and battles and seiges, arms and men arrange themselves on the narrow panorama. I do not purpose to reproduce the picture. I shall attempt nothing more than to sketch its outline, and to rehearse a few reminiscences associated with it.

I will commence this retrospect by adverting to the progress of science since the beginning of the century. So rich was the inheritance of knowledge bequeathed to us by the preceeding ages, that in some departments of inquiry we have not materially increased our inheritance. This remark applies, for example, to mental science. Our times have produced no metaphysician to take rank with Descartes and Locke and Leibnitz and Edwards. It is true that the school of transcendentalism, founded near the close of the last century, has obtained some popularity among us. I must, however leave to those who comprehend this philosophy the task of describing its progress. It sustains to true mental science the relation in which the art of ballooning stands to that of locomotion. Both belong to the clouds, and deserve

to be commemorated in the comic verse of a modern Aristophanes. Transcendentalism seems, it is true, to be a suitable appendage to the speculations much in vogue about a hundred years ago. Berkley demonstrated, so he thought, that the external world is not a real world, but an idea merely. Hume and his disciples took up the argument and maintained that the existence of the spiritual being is equally delusive, and that what we call the mind is a mere current of sensation and reflection. Our new philosophers have now reached the ultimatum of these metaphysics by resolving the universe both of matter and mind into a universe of fog. If our true modern philosophy have made no large contributions to moral science it may, at least, claim the merit of having stood proof against every type of metaphysical lunacy.

Nor has the science of pure mathematics received many important accessions. Six years before the settlement of Plymouth, Napier published in his "Canon Mirificus Logarithmorum," the theorems by the help of which our surveyors now run their lines through the western wilderness. The geometrical principles, by which we build our ships and lay down their paths in the sea, were announced long before the western continent rose to the eye of Columbus from the bosom of the deep. We have done little more for the science than to reproduce in more intelligible forms its well known truths, and to simplify some of the methods of induction and analysis which were invented before the end of the seventeenth century.

The science of astronomy has been cultivated with rather more success, during the period under review. In the department of calculation, the name of La Place and that of his great commentator, our own Bowditch, are immortal. In the department of observation we have discovered the remarkable group of asteroids, eleven in number, between the planets Mars and Jupiter, and have computed their elements. We have discovered the eighth satellite of Saturn; we have

resolved the nebulae into clusters of stars, by the increased penetration of the telescope. We have also, in the recent discovery of the planet Neptune, supplied a brilliant illustration of the compass and accuracy of the science. Two of our philosophers—one in England and the other in France—by simultaneous, though independent inductions, demonstrated the existence of the planet, as an astronomical necessity, before the planet itself was seen by the observer. And yet this discovery of a new world, by the processes of reason, is only the result of principles announced by the older astronomers. And then its observation in the heavens was effected by the use of an instrument, the bequest also of other ages. They learned, through slow and weary toil, to transmute, by the torture of fire, the dull earths and black ores into glass and steel; next, to fashion the lens and mould the polished mirror, and then to seize the the darting beam of light, compel it to confess its laws of motion and “untwist its prismatic rays.” Then, following some electric flash of thought, they combined these elements in the telescope, one of the grandest inventions of the human mind, giving to the eye of mortal man a circuit as wide as the circuit of the heavens. While, however, we cannot rival the older astronomy, either in its methods of induction, its instruments, or its discoveries, this circumstance brings with it no reproach. As another Columbus cannot arise, because there remains no continent to be discovered, so we cannot reproduce a Copernicus, a Galileo, or a Newton, because there are no new revolutions of the heavenly bodies to be unfolded. Like the great constellations which have come down to us from distant ages, the old astronomers beam forth in their appropriate quarter of the mental firmament. We walk under their light, but cannot set another shining one, star or mind, in the glowing girdle of the Creator.

In other branches of physical science, however, the annals of our half century are adorned with the most brilliant discoveries. Of these, I can mention here but two examples—

geology, as a specimen of what has been accomplished in the department of observation, and chemistry, as an instance of advancement in that of experiment and analysis.

Until late in the last century geology was little more than another name for a laughable quarrel between the Plutonians, who held that the rocks came chiefly of fire, and the Neptunists, who referred their origin to the action of water. But the recent investigations into the problem of organic remains have assigned it a place among the noblest of sciences. Allow me to spend a few sentences in stating some of the results of these investigations. It seems to be established that the stratified rocks, above the primary, contain petrified relics of both plants and animals. The thickness of these fossil-bearing rocks is from three to seven miles, measuring from the surface of the earth towards its centre. Through this entire mass of rock organic remains are unequally but profusely distributed. The number of their different species amounts to nearly ten thousand. These organic remains exist in quantities incalculably great; in some instances, mainly constituting entire mountains. They vary in size, from the skeletons of huge monsters to those of animalculæ so small that forty thousand millions are contained in a single cubic inch. The less complex and perfect tribes of animals and plants predominate in the lower strata, and those of a higher organization, approaching as to structure the types now existing, occupy the formations near the surface of the earth. The general order in which they occur, ascending from below, is fish, reptiles, birds, mammalia. Some specimens of each type, however, are found in all the higher formations. The races, both vegetable and animal, preserved in the fossil state, are, with few exceptions, now extinct; and finally, a remarkable circumstance, no traces of the human being, either of his person or his arts, have been discovered in the fossiliferous strata. These facts are supposed to be established.

The deductions derived by geologists from these premises

are, that there has been a series of distinct creations on earth, occurring at intervals indefinitely long. At first, animals and vegetables, of the simplest organization—shell fish and mosses being the prevalent types—were created, destroyed, and embedded in the growing rock; then a higher order of life was brought into existence—reptiles and cone-bearing trees predominating. These, in turn, became extinct, and petrified. Upon these a third and yet higher creation was superimposed, and was in its turn entombed, to give place to another and more perfect system, until at last the earth, as it now is, was formed of the wrecks of all the earlier creations, and man, made a little lower than the angels, was ushered into existence. It is further held, that the first and second verses in the book of Genesis relate to the earlier and imperfect creations, and the narrative which follows, of God's work in six days, describes the formation of the world as it now exists, with its firmament, its dry land and waters, and all their teeming tribes. Such is the latest theory of the creation.

It is undoubtedly a splendid hypothesis; but we must be pardoned if we hesitate to adopt it in the present unsettled state of the science. We must be allowed to subject both the facts and the theory resting on them to a severe and almost a sceptical scrutiny. We must yet inquire, first, whether, supposing the facts to be as alleged, there be not others yet undisclosed, which will materially modify the conclusions drawn from those now known; next, whether they may not be accounted for by some other hypothesis equally rational; and finally, whether that hypothesis be consistent with the word of God, fairly interpreted. This latter suggestion is of capital importance. It is a maxim of the soundest philosophy to proceed from truths known to truths unknown. No theory of the creation, therefore, can be admitted, which is inconsistent with the word of God, for the simple reason that such a theory, contradicting known truths, must be false. It is also a maxim of christian phil-

osophy, that the scriptures may not be subjected to fanciful interpretations, to accommodate the fanciful theories of the world builders. And it is, further, the persuasion of the christian scholar that there is no conflict, and there can be none, between true science and true religion. We believe in God the Father, the creator of the heavens and the earth, and the author also of the eternal word. There can be no discrepancy, at last, between the creation, the record of his power, and the word, the record of his will. He who wrote his law on the tables of stone at Sinai, has written nothing but truth on the rocks beneath our feet. Happy the man who truly interprets and reverently receives what God has revealed both in his word and in his works !

But if the hypothesis of modern geology shall be finally established, the Bible, truly understood, thereto consenting, we need regret no longer that ancient astronomy has exhausted the heavens of their philosophy. If it be true that the rocks are the tombs of animated tribes, which flourished and perished before the epoch of man ; that the mountains are the crowded and swelling catacombs of worlds older than they ; that these rocks, like the undissolving snows of the arctic circle, mark, in their successive layers, the lapse of ages ; that these rocky strata are massive scrolls upon which the orders of ancient life have petrified an unchangeable history of extinct creations ; and which are filled with inscriptions, monumental of worlds long since dissolved, not chiseled upon the surface, but wrought into the very structure itself by the finger of the Almighty ; if these things be true, Geology may challenge Astronomy—the earth may challenge the heavens—to unfold sublimer revelations.

As we dig downwards, through zone after zone of organic remains, do we read the history of life backwards towards its dawn ? Does the earth treasure up in its labyrinthal vaults the secret things of God ? When we lay open the foundations of the hills, do we discover there the hidings of His power, in whose hands are the deep places of the earth, and

whose is the strength of the hills also? Still further, has geology its prophecy, as well as its history? If this creation has been preceded by those less perfect, is it to be followed by others more glorious still? There is to be "a new heaven and a new earth;" are these foreshadowed by the creations which have passed away? Is the present order of things but one of a series of dynasties, the first and lowest of which is in the bosom of the everlasting Past, and the last and most sublime is in the womb of the everlasting Future? Is our creation but one bright link in the ever-brightening chain of God's eternal Providence? By such inquiries does human reason confess its ignorance. Let us reverently wait for further and fuller disclosures.

"Parts like half sentences confound; the whole
Conveys the sense, and God is understood."

I turn now to the recent progress in chemistry. The Voltaic pile was invented just at the beginning of the century. The discoveries in galvanism which immediately followed, are among the most valuable in the annals of science. Indeed, it may be questioned whether the Voltaic battery does not rival the telescope in the brilliancy and utility of its results. The ignition and fusion of metals—the decomposition of substances, both fluid and solid—the generation of electro-magnetism, leading at once to the invention of the electric telegraph—the power of the deflagrator, more magical than the touch of Midas, transmuting charcoal into diamonds—the philosophical classification of substances according to their electric energies, are among the results of this invention. Another line of investigation, less striking, possibly, in its experiments, but not less important in its consequences, has terminated in the discovery that bodies combine chemically with each other in determinate proportions. The knowledge of this law has communicated to the principles of chemistry the certainty of mathematical formulæ, and has elevated it, from a collection of amusing, but unrelated phe-

nomena, to the dignity of a science. Still more recent improvements in the art and instruments of analysis have enlarged the boundaries of investigation, until it would seem that under the question and torment of the laboratory, nature must speedily surrender her utmost secrets, and disclose, at last, the final elements, the uncompounded subtle essences of all material things.

These scientific discoveries are remarkable, also, for their applicability to the uses of life. Chemistry, for example, visits our farms; it analyses the grains, and vegetables, and grasses, and ascertains the quantity of nutriment which each contains. It examines our soils, and teaches us how to enrich them. It resolves into their elemental principles our very blood and flesh and bones, and indicates the food that will best maintain our vital heat, and repair our wasting strength. It waits in our sick chambers, purifying the infected air, and compounding new and healing medicines. It condescends to the humble labors of the dairy and the kitchen. Won by the charms of our wives and daughters, it mingles colors for their silks, more beautiful than the Tyrian dye. It visits the city, and at its fiery touch, light blazes from the blackest of minerals, and night becomes day in street and hall and dwelling. It stretches its wires from zone to zone, and gives to words electric wings, realizing, at last, the conception of the old Grecian bard,

“*επεα πτεροεντα*.”

It takes the sunbeam for its pencil and graver, and realizes the conceptions of nature herself, in the images of her fairest forms.

The steam engine, another invention, substantially, of our century, has become one of the main forces of civilization. It delves in the mine, and toils in the forest and the quarry. It burns along the track of the railway; it stems the current of the impetuous rivers; it strikes boldly out upon the ocean, cleaving its head-seas asunder, and buffeting the driving winds. It labors while it stands and while it runs. It screams

and whistles and hisses and smokes at its endless toil. It dismisses, to the old curiosity shop, the printing press of Franklin, and drives machinery which issues twenty thousand impressions in an hour. It silences the hum of the spinning wheels of Penelope and her maids, in the buzz of its ten thousand spindles. No work is too hard or hot for its rough energies, none is too delicate for its exquisite skill. The anvil rings again under the fast falling blows of its sledge, and its tiny fingers weave and embroider gossamer wings for the fairies. Its feet are swifter than the feet of Camilla, and its arms outnumber the hundred arms of Briareus. Like the sun, it knows neither day nor night, fatigue nor repose. Now it is the servant of man, and the finger of a child can turn it hither and thither; then by one sudden, terrible impulse of its outbursting strength, it strews the earth with ruins, and the sea with wrecks; it scatters, far and wide, the members of its master—man, so that Medea herself could not re-assemble the bleeding fragments.

From the progress of knowledge, the transition is natural to its wide diffusion during the period of review. We suffer a delusion to pass upon us when we hear of the Augustan ages of literature. Our rapid impression is, perhaps, that these were periods of extraordinary illumination. But a nearer view shows us that history celebrates the genius of a few illustrious men, and passes in silence the ignorance and debasement of the multitude. The intelligence of the people, in the days of Elizabeth, may be estimated by the fact that it was impossible to supply the churches with persons who could read, with decency, the liturgy, although fully written out for their use. Their morality may be judged of by the statement, that in one county, although not a fifth part of the felonies committed were brought to trial, forty persons were executed in a year for crime, thirty-five were branded, and as many whipped; that the other parts of England were in no better condition, and at least three or four hundred vagabonds in each county lived by rapine and theft. And yet

this is the age that proudly boasts its Shakspeare, Raleigh, Spencer, Sidney, Bacon, Cecil, Walshingham, and Coke. While we gaze upon this grand display of mind, how little do we think of the prostrate and grovelling multitudes who starved upon the pomp of the Virgin Queen. We are like the voyager crossing the line; while he gazes upon the glory of the southern heavens, the constellation of the cross, he forgets the brutal millions in the adjacent continents and islands, on whom it shines. They see its stars, but they cannot trace its shape along the sky, nor interpret its mysterious sign. The age of Elizabeth was an age, at once, of great light and gross darkness. The light gilded, but did not penetrate, the darkness. Learning and genius, such as the world has produced but once, communicated no vital, quickening force—no upheaving impulse to the stupid mass of mind. The educated few, instead of elevating, despised the ignorant populace. The motto of the old noble, *pro rege, lege, grege*, discloses, in its last term, the estimate he placed upon the people. Equivalent expressions, such as the “vulgar herd,” and the “lower sort” appear in all the English classics. Nor did this popular ignorance fail to avenge itself on the haughtiness and contempt of the learned. A people unable to read are but indifferent patrons of literature, and have but little taste for poetry and philosophy. Accordingly, Shakspeare was compelled to earn his bread by enlisting as a stock actor, and playing the part of the Ghost to his own Hamlet; Bacon found as few to comprehend his philosophy as to defend his corruption; Spencer died almost of starvation; and more than fifty years later, Milton sold for five pounds the copy-right of *Paradise Lost*.

Now, one of the characteristics of our century is the wide diffusion of knowledge. Allow me to mention, rapidly, the elements of this movement. We find one of them in the devotion of the best minds of the age to the interests of popular education. The ripest wisdom and experience are employed in perfecting our systems of education; the highest scholarship

is engaged in the preparation of text books and other educational apparatus; and those who are ambitious for a post of honor aspire to the profession of the teacher. The multiplication and improvement of colleges and professional schools is another element. The schools of medicine, law, and theology, in their present improved condition, are the offspring of our century. In these institutions, and in our universities and colleges, the course of study is adapted to the wants of the many, rather than to the curiosity or caprice of the few; professorships of science and the useful and liberal arts are founded; the seminaries, being munificently endowed, are enabled at once to reduce the expenses and elevate the standard of education; and the establishment of new institutions brings their advantages within the reach of all the people.

More memorable still is the wide extension of the system of free-schools, under the care and patronage of the State. The enlargement of this system is one of the highest missions to which the leading minds of this generation are called; and, happily, they do not neglect the intimation. "The schoolmaster abroad," an expression which is sometimes repeated with derision, is, I submit, a very respectable substitute for the rope, the whip, and the branding iron, by which Elizabeth educated her subjects to a wholesome reverence for the law. Again, the multiplication of books is contributing to the same result. The power press, the steam engine, the application of new machinery to the preparation of paper and other materials used in printing, have imparted an astonishing impulse to the art. The rapid increase of authors and readers, the cheapness and abundance with which books are produced in Europe and America, and the facility with which they are distributed throughout the world, would seem to indicate that no limits are to be set to the progress of society in this direction. And, further, science and literature are in many ways made accessible to the common mind. The knowledge which was formerly embalmed in the pon-

derous and aristocratic folio is now spread upon the pages of the Penny Cyclopaedia and the People's Magazine. Our philosophers publish their discoveries and methods of induction, not in the bad latin of my Lord Bacon, but in the plain vernacular of the Queen and the Republic. Our professors of science, who, fifty years ago, lectured only within the monastic precincts of the university, now unfold the mysteries of nature within the humble walls of the village lyceum and the mechanic's institute. These gentlemen have long enjoyed a dignified seclusion from the walks of common life. But now that science herself condescends to be useful, now that even the lightning comes down from the sky to run upon our errands, the chemist, the geologist, and even the philosopher and the poet, must lay aside the scholastic gown and pompous air of olden times, and engage heartily in the diffusion of knowledge.

We should not forget to mention here the periodical press. The Edinburgh Review was commenced in the second year of the century. Its success as a literary enterprise, and its efficiency as a party organ, led to the establishment of several similar publications. They are obnoxious to some serious objections. They espouse, too often, local and party interests; they tempt the indolent to rest contented with superficial information; they contribute but little to the advancement of learning. Yet, in the diffusion of knowledge already gained, they serve a most important purpose. Their pages contain the most elegant criticism of the day, a searching analysis of the motives and characters of public men, broad and luminous views of passing events, and eloquent disquisitions on topics historical, political, and philosophical. They come in aid of the cheap and popular treatise on science and art, the lyceum and the lecture room, to bring the general mind in contact with the genius and learning of the age. Nor should the newspaper be undervalued as a schoolmaster to the people. Although not the invention of our century, the journal of the present day is an expansion of the old idea of

the newsletter, as remarkable as the development of a Hercules from the frame of the weak and rickety child. It is now a record of every passing day. It is a geography, an encyclopedia, and a history. It is alive with facts and logic, and eloquence and wit, and invective and retort. The steamship and the telegraph pour intelligence from all lands into its capacious columns. It both propagates and exposes every kind of falsehood. It dives into the secrets of cabinets; it assails the policy of the wisest statesman; it defends the liberties of the meanest citizen. Its influence is so mighty, that in England it is, by general consent, styled the fourth estate; in France it deposed Louis Phillippe, appointed the Provisional Government, and then proclaimed the Republic; in this country its power is inferior only to that of the people themselves. Such are some of the agencies employed in the work of popular education.

What has been said of the diffusion of knowledge introduces another topic—the spread of christianity during the period under review. The aggressive character of protestant christianity remained almost wholly undeveloped at the beginning of the present century. The missionary system of the Roman Catholic Church had been in active movement about two hundred and fifty years. Simultaneously with the Reformation, in the sixteenth century, the Jesuits arose to resist the inroads of Protestantism upon the domains of the Roman Church, and to enlarge those domains by the conversion of foreign lands. To say nothing here of their toils and triumphs in the ancient East, we must admire the adventurous spirit with which they prosecuted their labors in the distant and savage world of the West. Before the settlement of Plymouth they established their religion on the eastern edge of the continent; and as early as 1634 they founded their missions on the borders of Lake Huron. Twenty-five years later they reared their rude chapels on the inhospitable shores of Lake Superior, and persuaded their savage converts beyond Green Bay, to hang skins, wampum, bows and arrows,

on the crucifix, as votive offerings to the great Manitou. The wave of our population in its western flow has as yet hardly reached the regions where this wonderful order were established, while our Fathers were struggling for a foothold on the shores of the Atlantic. Our most ancient geography perpetuates their memory in the names they gave to lakes, towns, and rivers—St. Peters, Sault St. Maria, St. Vincent, St. Louis, St. Anthony and the river St. Jerome. Sonora and California are lands but lately known among us; and yet, more than a century ago, the Jesuit Fathers established their missions at San Jose and Ciudad de los Angeles, and carried the holy water and the wafer to the tribes who chased their game along the golden streams.

It was not until near the beginning of the present century that the Protestant church began to apprehend the duty of propagating its purer faith. Since that period, however, the enterprise has gone forward with accelerating rapidity. A vast preparatory work has been accomplished. Missionary societies, and associations auxiliary to them, have been founded; the churches have, themselves, assumed the form of missionary orders; prejudices have been removed; information has been gathered and diffused; new and uncouth jargons have been reduced to the forms of written language; the Bible, which fifty years ago had been published in less than fifty dialects, is now translated into two hundred tongues; and the benevolence of the christian world, which had contributed almost nothing to the object, now gives nearly two millions of dollars annually to the foreign missionary societies alone.

The results of these labors may be stated in a word. First, the church is pervaded with the spirit of missions. This spirit enters into the religious life of every intelligent christian. The duty of giving the Gospel to the world has identified itself with the very conception of personal religion. Accordingly, the churches, as such, embrace the work of missions among the essential elements of their organizations.

A church without missions would be deemed an anomaly, almost as singular, as a church without a Savior. This state of sentiment and principle promises to give permanency and growing power to these religious enterprises. The work itself, also, has been commenced. In our own country domestic missions are spreading with the spreadings of the population. Two thousand missionaries have gone from Europe and America to different heathen lands. These have gathered, at least, four thousand churches, whose communicants amount to nearly two hundred and fifty thousand. They have also established three thousand missionary schools, embracing two hundred and fifty thousand children. The whole world begins to feel the impulse. Islands in the North and South Pacific, inhabited by savage, some of them by cannibal tribes, have received the Gospel; we have assaulted the Mohamedanism of Syria and the Fetichism of Africa; India is occupied with mission stations from the sultry coasts of Ceylon and Malabar to the glaziers of the Himmilayas; and our own American brethren have fulfilled one of the conditions on which the ultimate triumph of the Gospel depends, by shedding their blood in China and Sumatra.

From the spread of christianity I turn to review the progress of liberty during the half century now drawing to a close. I am afraid that we cannot boast for our age any wide extension of liberal principles. The English constitution has undergone some important changes looking to the recognition and assurance of popular rights. Our own institutions have experienced an extraordinary expansion; but all the liberties that we enjoy were bequeathed to us from the battle grounds of the revolution. Mexico and some of the South American provinces have assumed the forms of republicanism, in mockery of the thing. Russia maintains her remarkable type of absolutism, instinct with life and power, the terror of all the conterminous empires, both European and Asiatic. Spain and Portugal lie passive under the opposite

type of absolutism, inert and stupid, the contempt of mankind. Freedom has won no permanent triumphs, except within the narrow limits of central Europe. This was the field on which Napoleon fought out his wild and terrible battle of life. His name, and a great name it is, belongs to the present century. In 1801 he was General Bounaparte, the master of Italy and lower Egypt, and the First Consul of France. But the name of Napoleon, the Emperor, belongs to a later period. It is associated with events which have made historical forever the plains of Leipsic, Marengo, Austerlitz, and Waterloo; and which have made immortal the names of his marshals and his enemies, Ney and Murat, Blucher and Wellington. History has no higher task now before it than to record the Fabian struggle in Spain; the hesitating policy of Prussia and Austria, its punishment, and its revenge; the might of England and of France; the march from Paris to Moscow, marked by a continuous chain of victories, and the retreat from Moscow to Paris, marked by the continuous graves or unburied bones of the dead; the uprising and confederation of the Teutonic and Slavonic nations; Paris occupied by the allied armies; Waterloo and St. Helena; the downfall of the Emperor and his Promethian fate.

To the great events which attended the fortunes of Napoleon, we are to refer the present condition and future prospects of liberal principles in central Europe. Something has been gained to these principles. France has cast off successively the dynasties of Bourbon and Orleans. She is, perhaps, a republic without being republican, and may yet return to legitimacy. But the France of 1850 can never become the France of the last century. It would be impossible to re-establish a Louis XIV or a Louis XVI and his court in Paris, just as it would be impossible to replace the Wyandots and Shawanese on their old hunting grounds in Kentucky. If France have not sufficient intelligence for republican institutions, she has at least enough of the spirit of freedom to save her from disastrous re-action. It is true, perhaps, that the

proposed confederation of Germany, under some popular forms and show of liberal principles, is intended to enlarge, as far as possible, the prerogatives of the few, and abridge, as far as possible, the rights of the many; yet even Prussia would not brook again the absolutism of Frederick the Great. In Italy also it may be true that the love of liberty is as yet feeble and irresolute; yet Rome would not now endure the narrowness, bigotry and petty tyranny of Gregory XVI.

But the tokens for the future are brighter. At least three great elements of free institutions have established themselves in central Europe. First, the spirit of liberty is abroad. Secondly, the written constitution has been introduced. Thirdly, the legislative assembly has been established. The spirit of liberty is a contagious spirit, vital too, and audacious. The events of the last three years have no meaning if they do not indicate, even in the revolutionary proceedings of Paris and Berlin and Rome, something of a desire for true rational freedom. The recent struggle in Hungary was unquestionably a struggle for the rights and liberties of the nation. It was so understood, and as such was violently suppressed by Austria and Russia. This spirit disguises or reveals itself under many aspects; a restless discontent with existing institutions; a vague aspiration after better things, men know not what; an open insurrection or a secret conspiracy against authority; a war upon the hierarchy; a passion for change and revolution; an unguided or misguided frenzy. Yet these, frequently, when traced to their true causes, are seen to be the agitations of liberty in the ranks of the people.

The introduction of the written constitution is not less significant. I care not what it may be styled nor how it may be framed; I care not how vigilantly it may protect the supremacy of the sovereign, or how absolutely it may restrain the rights of the subject; the instrument is, by necessity, a revolutionary document, a limitation of prerogative and a concession to liberal principles. The Magna Charta and the

Declaration of Rights, although expressed in guarded and kingly phrase, contained the germ of all the free institutions of England. The written charters, recently granted by the liberality or extorted from the fears of the European princes, may seem to recognize few privileges and fewer rights as belonging to the people; yet these instruments establish principles on which future revolutions will move in procession, until monarchy is either destroyed as in France, or consents to the freedom of the subject as in England.

The establishment of a parliament also, under the name of the congress, council, or cortex, is not only an innovation, but is, in fact, a revolution. The monarchy is absolute no longer. The assembly may, at first, enjoy but a shadow of power; it may be composed exclusively of the nobility, or of a portion only of that order, and that portion selected by the crown; yet it is, in some sort, even then, a popular assembly. The history of the English parliament, at first feudal, composed of barons, knights, and bishops, now reformed, and composed in part of a house of commons, then sitting with limited and now with almost unlimited powers, clearly shows what are the inherent tendencies of such an assembly. These are irresistible towards successive changes, both in its constitution and its prerogatives, until it becomes, in the first place, a representative assembly, chosen by the people, and, secondly, a body holding the purse and the sword—a power around the throne greater than the throne itself. Such will, unquestionably, be the history of the European councils. With these three forces in motion, we may conclude that liberty in Europe has received a mighty impulse since the century began, and will experience a mighty development before the century shall close.

I may not omit, in this retrospect, to mention the advancement of our own country during the era of which I am treating. Fifty years is an inconsiderable period in the life time of a nation; yet the history of the world contains no other instance of national growth and development so rapid

and gigantic. If, by some magical process, the country, as it was in 1801, could be reproduced before us, we should not recognize its features. The revolutionary war had been closed only seventeen years, and the federal constitution was in the thirteenth year of its existence. The principles of that instrument were imperfectly understood. Two great political parties were fighting for power. The memorable contest between Jefferson and Burr, for the presidency, was pending. It was terminated a few weeks after the century opened, in the midst of convulsions which threatened the dissolution of the Union. Washington, moreover, had just descended to the tomb at Mt. Vernon. Napoleon Bounaparte was mustering his armies for a war that should shake the earth. We were overwhelmed by the debt incurred in the revolution. We had neither army, navy, or treasury. We were regarded, abroad, as a feeble republic, existing as such by the sufferance of the European monarchies, cherishing a childish attachment to republican forms, and absurdly dreaming that the several states could be held together by a paper constitution. The river Mississippi, now in the middle of our imperial domain, was then our western boundary. The vast regions beyond, out of which we might now carve seventy States as large as Kentucky, together with New Orleans and the access to the sea, had been recently transferred to Napoleon by the secret treaty of St. Ildefonso. We were indebted to the courtesy of a foreign power for the right to navigate the river, and to deposit merchandise at New Orleans. Florida belonged to Spain; Texas, Santa Fe, and California, to Mexico. Oregon was among the lands unknown. The population of New York city was 60,000; of Boston 25,000, and of Cincinnati and Louisville less than 500. Our entire population did not much exceed 5,000,000.

The steamboat, the railway, and the magnetic telegraph, were all unknown. The rivers Ohio and Mississippi were navigated by the rude broad-horn, floating downward with the current, or by the keel-boat, creeping upward along the shore,

and making its way by the weary toil of a hundred and fifty days from New Orleans to Pittsburg. The smaller streams—the Wabash and the Illinois—were swept only by the paddle of the Indian. The intercourse of the western people with the Atlantic border was conducted in the most deliberate and primitive style. The merchants rode on horseback from Lexington to Philadelphia, transporting their silver on pack-horses, toiling through the forests of Ohio, and along the rugged sides of the Alleghanies, and content to make the journey in thirty days. The dark forests, the impenetrable cane-brakes and thickets, even of Kentucky, were stoutly disputing with the man, though armed with the axe and the fire-brand, his right to the virgin soil. The Indian was just beginning to retreat before the advancing civilization, fighting his way backward towards the remoter hunting grounds; and the wild beast growled at the settler as he reared his cabin in the edge of the wilderness. Virginia had just ceded to the United States her title to the North Western territory; but neither the donor nor the beneficiary knew what an imperial domain she was giving away. With the exception of a few settlements in Ohio, the whole territory was in the hands of the aborigines; the Delaware towns were near the site of the present capital of Indiana, and none thought of disputing their rights to any region within a hundred miles of Tippecanoe. In the means of education and religious culture, our Commonwealth was far in advance of other western regions; yet, even here, our churches and schools were few and scattered, and our only seminary of liberal learning was the University at Lexington, then just commencing its diversified career. I must leave to you the task of instituting the contrast between the country as it is now, and as it was then. I could not fill up the picture in all the hours of a summer's night.

“Si monumentum quæris, circum-spice.”

I have now made mention of the few topics to which I proposed to advert in the course of this brief retrospect. Looking

at the direction taken by the great movements of the age, we cannot doubt that science, art, civilization and religion have made rapid and substantial progress. We may affirm, perhaps, that there never went by an age of such advancement.

I am not ignorant that this opinion is challenged by some able writers. Carlyle, for example, suggests that our period is "not an heroic, devotional, philosophical, or moral age but above all, a mechanical age." Another writer remarks, that when any new physical phenomenon is observed, or any new chemical compound is discovered, "the question is immediately asked, *cui bono*? Is food or drink to be got out of it? Will it make hats, or shoes, or cover umbrellas? Will it drive a steam engine, or make a mill go?" If it be worth while to return a grave answer to these insinuations, we may find it in the survey which we have now attempted. In what age has knowledge been so rapidly increased and widely diffused? When has christianity put forth more vigorous efforts for the welfare of mankind? When have churches, colleges, schools, books, newspapers, lyceums, libraries, and all the means of spiritual and mental culture been so multiplied and efficient? In what period has philanthropy cared so much for the ignorant and the oppressed—for the deaf, the blind, the insane and the orphan, the sick and the friendless? And further, the very machinery of the age is employed in the advancement of civilization. The power press is a machine—so is the steam engine—so is the railway and the telegraph. Yet these dismiss thousands from the drudgery, which once made the human frame a machine, but which is now performed by the forces of nature; they print books and give them circulation; they render the means of moral and intellectual culture as abundant and cheap as the elements.

It is also said this is "an age, not of learning and discovery and poetry, but of balloons and gas lights and lucifer matches and the water cure." But as it is fair to answer a sneer by a retort, we may reply that the hobbies extant are

quite as respectable as the hobbies extinct. The old method of sewing up the sick in the warm body of an ox, was a humbug quite as deplorable as the new way of wrapping them up in wet blankets. The chloroform of this mechanical age is quite as useful as the amulets, or even the elixer of life, far-famed in the heroic ages. There is little poetry, I grant you, in a modern india-rubber over-shoe ; but there was no more of the divine afflatus in the deer-skin moccason. An era of gas lights and lucifer matches may be as enlightened as an era of pine knots and torches. A chemistry which brews and bakes and cooks for the moderns is quite as philosophical as that which crazed the ancients with a promise of the philosopher's stone. Gun cotton and percussion caps are no more barbarous than poisoned arrows and spear heads. The revolver—even the bowie knife of the rude West, is not more terrible than the Aqua Tofana of classic Italy, clear as the crystal waters, but hiding a slow and fatal poison. The epoch of steam engines and magnetic telegraphs is no more heretical than the “devotional ages” when witches were hung, and ghosts exorcised by the priests and then shot with silver bullets. In these days of superficial scholarship, as they are styled, real learning is as much encouraged as when the Pope excommunicated Galileo and the Spaniards threw Columbus into chains. Common sense is at a discount no greater now, when infinitesimal doses are broken into portions infinitely minute, than it was when Harvey lost all his practice as a physician, because he taught the doctrine of the circulation of the blood. Our metaphysics are quite as spiritual as those of Hartley, with his vibrations and vibrationcles. Even our transcendentalism is as rational as the speculations of the last century, when a celebrated philosopher—and a bishop, too—wrote a treatise to prove that there is no material world ; that, for example, as Sidney Smith expounds it, “a man's arms and legs are not a man's arms and legs, but merely ideas, accompanied with the notion of *outness* ;” and then disgraced his philosophy, as to the de-

lusiveness of material things, by publishing a treatise in praise of Tar water as an infallible remedy for all diseases.

Thus much for the past. May I venture, modestly, to cast the horoscope of the future? Standing, as we do, at the high noon of this remarkable century, it is lawful, perhaps, not only to describe the brightness of its morning, but to anticipate the glories which will mingle themselves with its evening shades.

In the sciences more purely intellectual, it seems to be assumed, that we have reached the limits of human knowledge. It may be otherwise. It may be that, in the pure mathematics, the close of the nineteenth century will be signalized by the discovery of methods of analysis and induction rivaling the infinitesimal calculus, the invention of which characterised the end of the seventeenth. In the metaphysics, we may yet produce a mind whose telescopic power shall at last search through that sublime, but nebulous mystery:

“ Providence, foreknowledge, will and fate;
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute.”

In respect of the future progress of the physical sciences, the past instructs us to speak with caution. We could not predict the future advancement of the human mind, without seeming to be visionary, nor could we limit its acquisitions without being presumptuous. The inventions of the last fifty years, the voltaic battery, the railway, and the steam engine, together with the changes these have wrought on the face of the world, and the impulse they have given to christian civilization, admonish us to await, rather than anticipate, the discoveries of the fifty years to come.

The future age will, however, be characterised by the working out, if not the final solution, of some sublime problems, political, religious, and social. Let me state them here, and indicate such of their elements as have been already evolved.

The political problem relates to the development of two

dynasties animated by ideas the most contradictory and looking to issues the most diverse. These dynasties are the Republic of North America and the Empire of Russia. Both are in the northern temperate regions, the seat of every great empire and of every splendid form of civilization which have arisen on earth. Both are of modern, contemporaneous establishment as leading powers; for, without describing the impulse which each received from antecedents in its history, we may date the development of the republic from the revolution of 1776, and that of the Empire from the accession of Catharine II, in 1762. Both were established on virgin soil, their territory having been occupied by no preceding type of civilization or nationality. The centres of distribution, in both, were in high northern latitudes, where their hardy races were nurtured, and whence they have spread themselves towards warmer skies and more fertile soils. The population of each is remarkably homogenous; in the one, the Anglo Saxon, and in the other, the Slavic race vastly predominates. Within the last fifty years the population of the republic has swollen from five to twenty-five millions; that of Russia has risen from thirty to nearly seventy-five millions. Meanwhile, we have extended our territorial limits from the Mississippi, through forty degrees of longitude, beyond the vast plains and over the great western mountains to the edge of the Pacific. Russia, within the last eighty years, spreading over Europe, like an Arctic Ocean with its shores all taken away, has advanced its limits seven hundred miles towards Berlin and Paris, six hundred miles in the direction of Stockholm, five hundred on the way to Constantinople, and no less than twelve hundred towards Teheran. The warlike spirit of the republic has disputed with Great Britain the supremacy of the seas; it has displayed its flag on the towers of the Mexican capitol, and occupied the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains. Russia mingles her colors with those of Austria on the west; she confronts the crescent standards on the south; she turns the flank of the

Turkish armies by seizing the mountain passes of the Caucasus; and the Cossack squadrons, pushing their way towards central Asia, can almost hear the drum-beat of the British garrisons in Northern India. The Republic now holds the breadth of the western continent from ocean to ocean. The Empire rules the entire breadth of the eastern world, over Europe and Asia both, through nearly all the degrees of longitude that are marked upon a hemisphere, so that when the sun stands at high noon in the middle of her vast domains, his morning light gilds the towers of her eastern capital, and his evening splendors light up the waters that wash her eastern shores. Yet neither empire nor republic are content with their acquisitions; for the restless spirits of the one are clutching at Cuba,

“The precious stone set in the silver sea;”

and the other will give the world no peace while any glittering prize tempts her rapacity, be it the Golden Horn,

“The wealth of Ormus or of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous east, with richest hand,
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl or gold.”

Here the resemblance, between the two dynasties, gives place to the repugnancy between their sentiments, their central forces, and their aims. With us republicanism is so absolutely the sentiment and passion of the people that monarchy is impossible. Russia is so absolutely a monarchy, a tsarism, that republicanism is not only impossible, but incomprehensible. When a Russian general, in an insurrection against the emperor, ordered his troops to cry, “*A republic forever!*” an old grenadier exclaimed, “Well, then, *a republic forever!* but, after all, who is to be the tsar?” Our development is from the force of Protestantism; individual liberty; a spirit of enterprise; a passion, not over scrupulous, for adventure. The development of Russia is from the force of tsarism, or vast barbaric energies moulded and compacted into one mass, and that mass wielded by one man’s capacious mind and unconquerable will; the intense and sagacious

fanaticism of the Greek church; the ambition for the ascendancy of the Slavonic race, and a splendid conception of its destiny, which intoxicate the enlightened few and the ruder millions of the empire. Finally, the end of our ambition is to make the western continent republican, while Russia seeks to make Europe Cossack. Such is the political problem of the day, and such are some of its elements. Humanity will await its solution with profound concern. For the present, each of these dynasties finds ample room for expansion in its own hemisphere. But whether the world itself be wide enough for their complete and unconflicting development, is a question in political philosophy which it is easier to state than to resolve.

The religious problem exhibits its elements in the recent co-incidence of events, auspicious to the extension of christianity. The enterprises of the church have been mentioned. Simultaneously with the inception of these enterprises, other events have occurred, looking to similar results. One of these is the settlement of California. We have, for fifty years, been moving upon the heathen world from the eastern shore of the continent, and have been compelled to make almost the circuit of the earth, and to cross two oceans, on our way to Asia and the islands of the Pacific. We needed some position nearer our work. We needed a country whose climate, and soil, and rivers, and harbors, should invite the establishment of a great centre of christian civilization on the shores of the Pacific. It was indispensable that the country should be unoccupied, in which we might plant the Anglo Saxon race, remote from the regions where the Astec, the Indian, the Negro and the Spaniard mingle their blood, vices and superstitions. It was indispensable, too, that the country should possess extraordinary attractions for the emigrant, and yet that these attractions should be hidden from every eye until the land should become ours. All these conditions, the co-existence of which would seem impossible, are fulfilled in California. Its climate is genial, its bay is the noblest on earth; and

its wealth is the wealth of Ophir. Its treasures were strangely hidden from the searching eye of Cortez, who discovered its shores; from the Jesuit missionaries and gold hunters who followed his footsteps, and from the unerring instinct of modern rapacity. No sooner did the land become ours, than the sands began to glitter, the rivers rolled the generous tide along their courses, and the rock-bound and ice-bound vaults of the Sierra Nevada unlocked their golden gates. A nation was born in a day. It now looks forth upon the beaming brow of Asia; it feels the spicy gales of Polynesia. Commerce, the great auxiliary of the gospel, has at last found the long sought western passage to India, and is spreading her sails for shores whose unexhausted wealth has enriched western Europe for a thousand years. Those vast dominions, oceanic and continental, usurped by Satan, but long since given to the Son of God, now lie at our very doors. Our western mountains almost cover them with their shadows. The new position, far on towards the heathen world, is gained. The church may at once plant there her standard, and advance, as the sun advances, westward upon China, New Holland and Polynesia.

And, further, the Providence of God is bestowing on our English brethren similar, if not superior, advantages. The British colonies in the islands of the Southern Pacific are growing as rapidly, almost, as our own settlements on its Eastern shores. In New Zealand, which, in 1840, was known only as a land of canibals, there is now a large English population, well furnished with schools and stores, and several newspapers, and all the other appliances of a British colony. Within the circuit, which includes Australia, Van Dieman's Land, and New Zealand, there are not far from one million of people who speak our language. Already, true to the instincts of the race, they are complaining of the exactions, and enumerating the grievances which they suffer from the mother country. They must soon rise from their state of colonial vassalage into the dignity of an independent, and,

probably, a republican government. This accomplished, the race will soon overrun the thousand islands of the neighboring seas, establishing a powerful Polynesian Republic, and giving to our brethren there new positions, beneath the very strongholds of Asiatic idolatry.

And at this juncture, modern science brings her noble gifts and lays them upon the altar. She clothes the press with new and amazing energies, just when the church needs them for the rapid and universal diffusion of the Scriptures. She launches her steamships into the ocean to bring the life-giving word and the living ministry with quick dispatch to every heathen shore. For this, too, she lays down the railway, and fulfils the very words of Nahum, the prophet: "Its chariots shall seem torches—they shall run like lightnings." Then she sets up the magnetic telegraph, and fulfils the saying of the Psalmist—"thy word runneth very swiftly."

Who does not see, in all these things, a wonder-working Providence? First, he awakens in the bosom of his people the true spirit of missions; next, he brings the two great nations into contact with the heathen world, and then he arms his church with all the forces of modern civilization. So soon as the message is ready, the messengers are in waiting. When once the highway is cast up, the heavenly witnesses appear mounting their chariots, and ready to make the whole earth glad with their joy, and vocal with their songs. The spirits of the living creatures is in even the wheels of the chariots; the rings of the wheels are full of eyes round about; they look every way, and run every way, and turn not as they run; and "they run and return as the appearance of a flash of lightning." Such are the religious aspects of the coming age.

It is impossible, in the close of these remarks, even now too far extended, to state the great social problems which remain to be solved. Ours is an epoch of substantial and glowing philanthropy. Undoubtedly, much of fanaticism mingles itself with all human efforts to remove social evils.

But we may be assured, that this very fanaticism indicates the existence of real evils in society, and shows that there is something somewhere wrong. It is just the fever of the brain by which humanity is convulsed in its fight with oppression. The true man will patiently wait until he can detect the social wrong out of which the madness springs, and will then, with prudence and courage, attempt its redress.

But, gentlemen, I must retire from my vast and unexhausted theme. I have not, I fear accomplished my cautious purpose, to sketch the outline, merely, of this illustrious period. I have hardly touched the tops of things. But, possibly, I have said enough to put you upon a fascinating course of inquiry and speculation, and to indicate the responsibilities that await you. You will come into active life at the noon-tide of the century. Look on the Past and on the Future. Let not the venerable Past cast its shadows on you in vain. Let not the majestic Future prove you faithless to your trusts. You are to witness events which will change the face of the world. The age to come will be marked by intellectual power, a gigantic commerce, a brilliant science, and a diffusive christianity. Humanity will struggle, madly, perhaps, but yet resolutely, for a higher development. You must, therefore, arise and be men. The age of learned and respectable dullness has gone by. Let the old men fondly dwell on the past, dreaming dreams; the young men must see visions, the visions of things to come, and go forth to meet them. It is no time for diversion, even if it be elegant and intellectual. You must make labor, unremitting toil, your portion and passion until you die. Take the side of truth in every question of politics, morals and religion, and hold with it, and stand by it, winning or losing. The feeble in intellect or in purpose, the drone, the watcher of the clouds and the winds, the time server, the tide waiter, he for whom life has but one charm—in office, and but one shame—out of office, he who aspires to nothing nobler than to win the race, or at least to

raise the dust, in our Republican stadium—the Pennsylvania avenue—will be the contempt of the times. The man of intellect, courage, philanthropy, will be the MAN OF THE TIMES.

NOTE — On page 12th, for “starved,” read “stared.”